

By

Mike Whitesman

ALAN HAWKES, cigar-smoking manager of Amateur Cup opponents Oldbury United, watched a Berks and Bucks Senior Cup quarter-final clogged with frustration for Wycombe Wanderers.

Hampered by a bumpy, restricting pitch, and hindered by a string of remarkable refereeing decisions, the Blues went through the embarrassment of extra time on Saturday before securing their place in the last four and a clash with Wokingham at Loakes Park.

Ultimately, chirpy Didcot Town collapsed under a sudden goal rush from which Tony Horseman emerged three goals the richer and back on top of the Loakes Park scoring charts.

But Hawkes had no illusions over Wycombe's need for another 30 minutes before quashing the Hellenic League club. Realising they played minus John Delaney, Paul Fuschillo, John Maskell, and Ian Rundle, and with Geoff Anthony on international duty for Wales, he knows exactly what his men will be up against next week.

He left Station Road carrying

Three for Tony after extra time shock

Didcot Town 2, Wycombe Wanderers 5
(a.e.t.)

a bundle of form-notes under his arm and full of admiration for his Cup foes.

Barry Baker came through Thursday's return to training so well he won himself an immediate re-call.

Under such circumstances as confronted them, Wanderers need not feel too unhappy about their display and teamwork.

Didcot, backed by the confidence of recent success, kept a pre-match promise to attack, and player-manager George Pullin refused to order a change of approach despite heavy pressure from the Isthmians.

For 45 minutes Town countered well, until the second half saw them reduced essentially to long-range shooting and consequently to playing for a replay.

The football was never tidy — a factor which frayed much patience from a crowd dominated by Wycombe's two-tone blue. Within minutes they had started a heckling barrage aimed at referee Baker, whose decisions were often interesting to say the least.

There could be no argument, however, when Wycombe went into a 9th minute lead. Keith Searle crossed invitingly for Johnny Hutchinson to head home by the far post — a move fast becoming Wanderers' trademark.

The goal should have meant a rout there and then, but somehow that pleasure was denied the Blues until later.

Soon Pullin, an ex-Wycombe defender, nearly put through his own goal with a hasty back pass. And a shambles in front of Town's line, where Hutchinson and Larry Pritchard both met with bad luck, seemed the prelude to another score.

Indeed it was, but unexpectedly the other way. For Didcot, awarded a penalty as Vince Faulkner fouled Eadie inside the "box", drew back on terms from Tony King's 17th minute spot kick, placed to the far left and leaving Kevin O'Brien sprawled.

With a largish slice of fortune and some timely gymnastics by goalkeeper Sands, whose aerial display far outshone his suspect ground control, Didcot kept on level terms longer than they could have anticipated.

Hutchinson crashed the ball at Didcot's net from a difficult angle only to be foiled by a post after 33 minutes.

The second half put an ever increasing emphasis on Wanderers as their extra fitness and sharper skills dominated the park.

minutes to settle Wokingham's destination in the semi-final.

From the resumption, Horseman loosed a shot at Sands who blocked it down only for Wycombe's striker to return the ball again — this time with full effect.

Pritchard did much of the spadework on the edge of Town's area as Horseman made it 4-1 two minutes later.

And soon after Hutchinson again hit the post, Horseman's hat-trick was completed by a header from a corner off the right in the 112th minute.

A consolation goal came Didcot's way inside three minutes, Eadie centring off the right to leave Dave Davies an open goal.

The final scoreline, 5-2, just about summed things up, albeit 30 minutes later than should have been necessary.

But, with such a useful performance from Iain MacLean as overlapping right-back and an industrious return for Barry Baker, Wanderers can feel reasonably happy with their afternoon's outing.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: O'Brien; MacLean, Gale, Powell, Faulkner, Baker, Hutchinson, Bremer, (sub. Blunt, 78th min.) Searle, Pritchard, Horseman.

DIDCOT: Sands; Eadie, Prior, G. Pullin, T. Davies, Webb, King, Robertson, Bidmead, D. Davies, Clark, (sub. T. Pullin, not used).
Referee: D. Baker (Tilehurst).
Half-times: 3-1. Full-time: 5-2.
Goalscorers: Didcot: King (17, pen), D. Davies (115). Wycombe: Hutchinson (9), Pritchard (105), Horseman 3 (106, 108, 112).